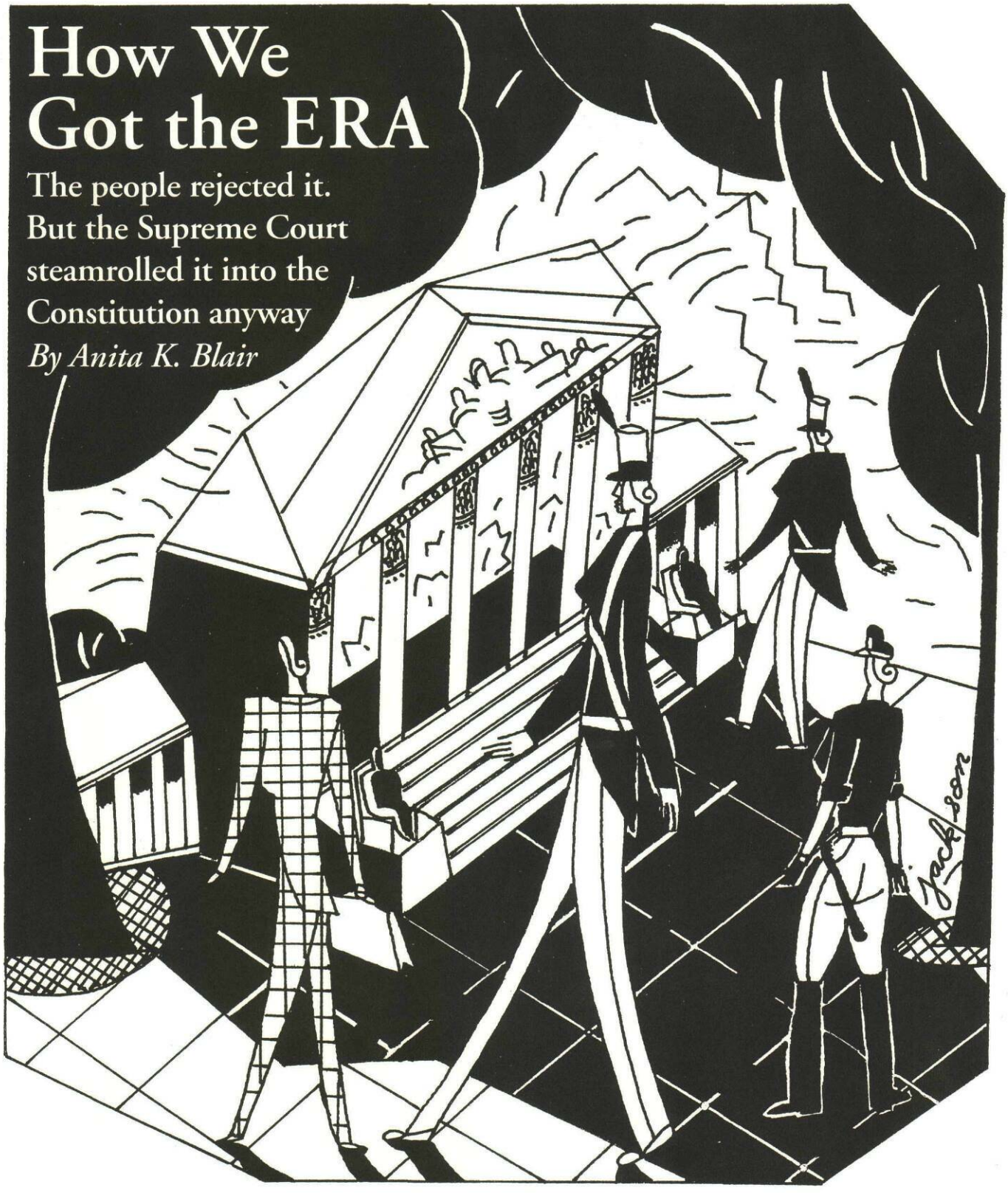
Spring 1997 ◆ Number 11

The Women's Quarterly



How We Got the ERA

The people rejected it. But the Supreme Court steamrolled it into the Constitution anyway

By Anita K. Blair

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Diary

Just Say No to Feminist Sex

When you're the editor of a publication entitled *The Women's Quarterly*, you receive a lot of odd submissions from those who think that any small magazine with the word "women" in it must be friendly to radical/lesbian/vegetarian/wiccan etc. feminists. If it's a press release, it invariably comes from the women's studies department of a small college ("Research Proves Men Innately Beastly, Prone to Eating Small Children"); if it's the newsletter of some fringe group, it's usually printed on coarse newsprint with a cover that resembles a ransom note. But sometimes I get sent things that are so hilariously representative of the people sending them that there is nothing to do, in fact, but publish them.

Such was the anthology a publicist hopefully passed along for review called *Tales from the Clit,* which at first I thought was a parody of feminist writing about sex. But no, its press release assured me that this book was a serious work, compiled by an organization called Feminists Against Censorship. The authors, it said, are some of the world's "most pro-sex feminists" who have provided "intimate, anti-censorship essays to re-establish that equality of the sexes doesn't have to mean no sex."

Yes, but they might actually put you off it. For even when feminists claim to like sex—and sex with men!—they can't stop being feminists. Much of the writing in *Tales from the Clit,* despite the graphic photo on its cover, is drearily earnest, burdened with academic feminist jargon. The authors want to convince their readers that they really, truly enjoy sex. But they don't seem able to convince themselves.

So, in the titillatingly titled essay, "A Deviant's Tale," an S/M afficionado describes her passion in such heated, lusty prose as this: "Surrounded by an atmosphere of secrecy, guilt, and isolation throughout my sexual development, I would often worry about the nature of my private fantasies. ...Fortunate for me, then, was the discovery of the large and active S/M and fetish scene in recent years. This, with its dark and potent images of domination, rubber, leather, whips, and bondage, has provided me with an ideal sexual outlet, supported by a wide range of specialist publications, all of which provides a more suitable setting for my fascination with images of power and pain...." *Phew!*

But that's not nearly as arousing as this writer's confession: "Eventually I was working in a clinic where I did gynecological work, and I saw more women's genitals...a lot of them were much cuter and pinker and a lot less unruly than mine." Or this: "The Batman comic has been porn for me: I've fantasized for many years about Batman and Robin as lovers." Or how about this: "Wholly unconscious of the fact that I was masturbating and 'getting off' on the images, I was quite addicted to conjuring them up in my mind, whilst pushing up and down against the family furniture." (Surely not safe sex!)

Actually, the most entertaining aspect of the book was the publisher's notes about the contributors. I suppose if there are any firm rules about writing pornography, one is that the reader must be persuaded—however falsely—that the author is sexually attractive, or at least not repulsive. These blurbs, alas, clearly know their audience. The book's co-editor, Cherie Matrix, "has organized and produced vaudevillian revues exploring the issues of sexual politics by examining female rudeness on stage." Deborah Ryder is "a masochist whose many published works include *Half Dressed, She Obeyed,* a collection of erotic fiction to match Pat Califa's *Macho Sluts.* Ryder is a member of the Outsiders, a club for people with disabilities seeking partners." Tuppy Owens is "the organizer of the annual Sex Maniacs' Ball." And we are reminded that the book's most famous contributor, the NEA-supported Annie Sprinkle, "has been a masseuse, hooker, hard-core movie star, centerfold model, and, in recent years, [thanks to your tax dollars] an artist-experimenter with S/M, piss sex, photography, and performance."

Given a choice, I think I prefer the wild-eyed, man-hating, anti-porn lunatics like Andrea Dworkin to this sorry lot of "pro-sex" feminists. At least Dworkin is on the side that would protest, rather than join and celebrate, the daily freak show of sexual exhibitionism we are increasingly asked to endure and, on daytime TV, even applaud. But then, this is what is so perfectly revealing about the book. The feminists who say "it's okay to enjoy porn" don't seem to like sex any more than Andrea Dworkin. But unlike Dworkin, they insist we watch them go at it.

– Danielle Crittenden

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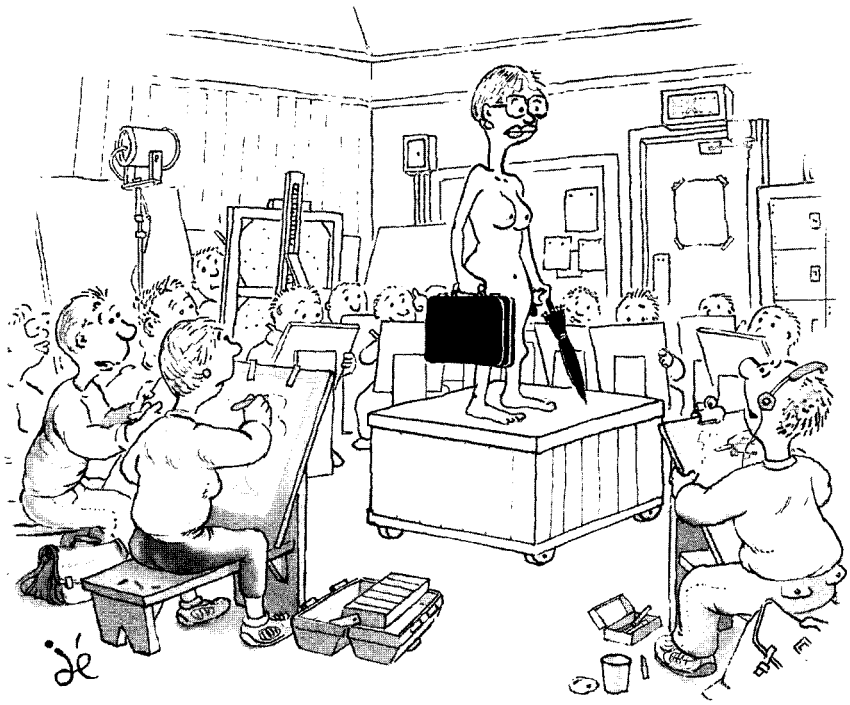

Cartoon by Charles Jaffé

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It's a Plague

Not a civil rights issue. Yet legislation that could help stop the AIDS epidemic will face steep opposition from activists, reports *Helen Mathews Smith*

A FIREMAN RACES up a smoke-filled staircase and pounds on an apartment door. Smoke spirals out from under the doorway but the person inside refuses to open the door. "You have no right to enter my home," he calls out. "The fire is my problem!" The firemen knock down the door and flood the apartment with water. The man angrily insists that the old-fashioned rules of firefighting do not apply to him, and that the firemen violated his right to privacy. Furthermore, he decides to take his grievance to Washington. Lawyers from the ACLU, professors from Harvard and Yale, and sympathetic politicians meet with the federal "Center for Fire Control." They all agree: the occupant's civil rights were violated, and they change the rules. Firemen may no longer enter a burning flat without permission, and the term "fire" is redefined as an "incendiary incident, the first stage of an event that may become a fire."

Irrational? Yes, but this is exactly the way federal authorities have been fighting a deadly crisis of another kind: the AIDS epidemic. For the past twelve years, and against all medical evidence, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the federal agency responsible for protecting the nation's health, along with the public health authorities of the majority of states where the epidemic is centered, have declared that the HIV virus which causes AIDS is not a sexually transmitted disease. In fact, New York State felt so strongly about the issue that it even passed a law in 1988 that said HIV wasn't a sexually transmitted disease, like syphilis, but a condition that might become a disease that we will then call AIDS. At the heart of this crisis was a decision made by the CDC in 1985. The agency announced that HIV, the "milder disease associated" with AIDS, "will not be nationally reportable." As a result, states that remain at the epicenter of the epidemic—California, Florida, New York, and Georgia—do not report HIV to the CDC.

The consequences have been disastrous. Although the federal government spends over $4 billion a year to fight AIDS, no government agency has the slightest idea how many Americans are HIV-positive. Estimates range from five hundred thousand to 1.5 million. The vast majority of them do not know that they are infected, and that means no one else does either, including their present or past sexual partners. And while the CDC reported a significant twelve percent decline in AIDS deaths overall when it released its 1996 statistics in February, the agency did not alert the nation to the alarming increase in AIDS cases among women and teenagers in the inner city.

In less than a decade, the number of women with AIDS has increased from four to twenty percent of the total number of patients; and in 1996, there was not a decline but a three percent increase in women's deaths. In many urban neighborhoods, twenty-five to thirty percent of those with AIDS are women, and among teenagers aged thirteen to nineteen, many more girls have the disease than boys. Black children account for almost sixty percent of those with AIDS under the age of thirteen. Last year was the first time that more blacks were infected with AIDS than whites. Meanwhile, not only are more heterosexuals becoming infected, but so are young gay men who have grown up listening to "safe sex" messages. And although the CDC has no way of knowing how many more people are infected with HIV every year, it estimates—from state reports of new AIDS patients—that there are a "minimum of forty thousand" new infections occurring annually.

Still, President Clinton was quick to take credit for the overall decline in

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AIDS deaths, announcing that the statistics were "further evidence that this terrible epidemic is beginning to yield to our sustained national public health investment in AIDS." But this is a little bit like saying that despite the fact we don't let firemen put out fires, the fires aren't killing quite as many people as we expected. The decline in AIDS deaths is a result of new drugs and better care—not effective public health measures. The CDC's 1985 decision not to include HIV infection as a reportable disease is unprecedented: For the first time in twentieth-century medicine, a deadly infection has been defined not by the organism that causes the disease (the HIV virus) but by the acronym AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) which describes the symptoms.

From a scientific point of view, the decision was totally irrational, but the CDC was backed by the medical and academic establishment, as well as gay activists determined to block routine HIV testing for reasons of privacy. Some public health officials, such as the head of the Denver Public Health Department, Franklyn Judson, considered the decision a mistake, but their views were never seriously considered.

FINALLY, THOUGH, SCIENCE and common sense may prevail. Legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives that would give health officials the authority to begin routine national testing and, in effect, to start spraying water at the base of the inferno. Seventy-three congressman, headed by Oklahoma Republican Tom Coburn, an obstetrician, introduced the HIV Protection Act in March. The American Medical Association (AMA) praised the bill for treating HIV infection as "the public health crisis that it is."

The bill requires "strict confidentiality" to protect the privacy of those infected, and it directs federal and state officials (in some twenty-five states) to make fundamental changes in how they collect data on the epidemic. Since AIDS and HIV are the same disease, the act says the regulations that govern the reporting of infectious diseases like syphilis and TB should also apply to HIV.

The bill also includes requirements for partner notification—critical in containing the spread of the disease—and gives to both patients and health-care workers the same right to know if a planned invasive surgical procedure will put them at risk of HIV infection. Incredibly, patients don't currently have this right. In France, the French Order of Doctors, representing over two hundred thousand physicians, recently asked HIV-infected surgeons to stop operating. The association just discovered that in 1993, a French surgeon who had been HIV positive for ten years infected a woman during hip replacement surgery.

The bill also says that if an insurance provider requires an HIV test, the applicant is entitled to know the results—again, unbelievably, a right that is not automatic. Frank Deramus, a lawyer, applied to the Mississippi's Jackson National Life Insurance Company for a policy in 1988. After taking a blood test, his application was rejected. When Deramus became ill, he asked the insurance company to tell him the results of his test. For three years, the company refused. Nine days after Deramus' death, the company told his wife Jody her husband had AIDS. Not only was Deramus denied medical treatment, insurance regulations put his wife at risk.

The bill would also address one of the most absurd and cruel situations created by our national AIDS policy. Victims of sexual crimes do not currently have the right to have their attackers tested for the disease. As it stands in many states, an accused rapist may refuse to take an HIV test. The bill's criminal law section would not permit anyone accused of a sexual offense to refuse such a test, and would make it a felony to knowingly infect another person. While some states have enacted such laws, many others have not. Maryland's highest court, for example, recently ruled that a man who knew he had HIV and then raped three women could not be tried for attempted murder.

As might be predicted, this bill faces strong opposition from civil libertarians and the gay lobby. But just as democracy cannot survive without laws, neither can public health. Most responsible people would agree that fighting this epidemic is not about civil rights. Plagues are firestorms and have to be fought as such—as we have fought every other plague in the twentieth century. As the American Medical Association stated, the HIV Protection Act "strikes [the] balance" between "the needs of HIV-infected patients with the prevention needs of those who are uninfected." But unless there is enough political pressure to give the HIV Prevention Act a full and respectful hearing, nothing will change but the number of casualties. ◆

Helen Mathews Smith, the former editor of MD Magazine, *is writing a book on the HIV epidemic.*

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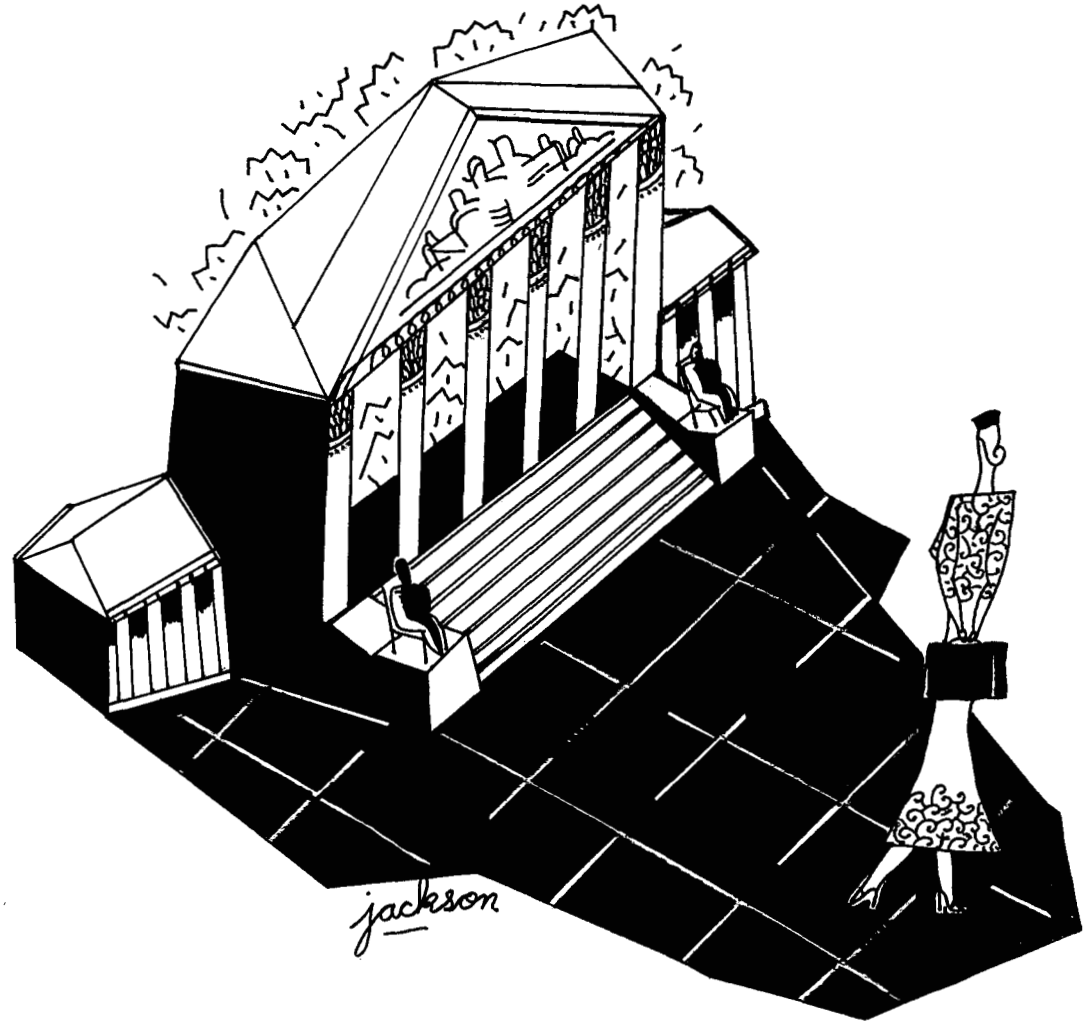
How We Got the ERA

The people rejected it. But the Supreme Court steamrolled it into the Constitution anyway, writes *Anita K. Blair*



You won't find the Equal Rights Amendment in any copy of the Constitution. Even though it was rejected by the states two decades ago, the ERA has quietly and stealthily become the law of the land thanks to twenty-five years of Supreme Court decisions first guided and then written by ERA advocate and now-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. "There is no practical difference between what has evolved and the ERA," she remarked in a recent appearance at the

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University of Virginia School of Law, adding, "I would still like it as a symbol to see the ERA in the Constitution for my granddaughter." Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney [D-New York] obliged by reintroducing the failed amendment for a third run on March 22.

Many have probably forgotten what the ERA battle was about, or why opposition to it at the time was so bitter. Its cheerleaders—largely the National Organization for Women and its sympathizers—believed an ERA was necessary to bring women into full equality with men; its critics, especially the Stop ERA movement spearheaded by Phyllis Schlafly, saw it as a feminist ploy to shove radical ideas of sexual equality into the Constitution. Whatever the ERA's intent, the American people eventually rejected it through their elected representatives. While Congress passed the ERA in 1972, only thirty-five states had ratified it by 1977, and none thereafter. To be added to the Constitution, the ERA needed approval by two-thirds of the states within seven years. Proponents demanded, and got, a second chance, but the ERA was finally declared dead in 1982.

But was it dead? Or had it just temporarily stopped breathing, awaiting resuscitation by a more sympathetic and interventionist Supreme Court? For when you stand back and survey today's legal landscape, it's startling to notice how many of the ERA's goals have been written into law. Even Schlafly's most dire predictions have come to pass: co-ed bathrooms on college campuses, the abolition of single-sex public colleges, and in Hawaii, the use of an ERA provision in the state constitution to support homosexual marriage.

How did this happen? Mainly because while the ERA battle raged in the state legislatures, NOW and friends like the American Civil Liberties Union launched a second front in the courts. Among the most prominent advocates seeking adoption of the ERA by other means was the head of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project at that time: Columbia Law School professor Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Until her appointment as a federal judge in 1980, Ginsburg herself briefed and even argued several of the major Supreme Court cases in the 1970s dealing with sex classifications under the Fourteenth Amendment. Her appointment to the Supreme Court bench in 1993 was the final jolt ERA needed to be brought back from the dead.

Sadly, though, Ginsburg's judicial embrace of ERA will only advance an ideological war on nature, which aims to achieve equality between the sexes by refusing to acknowledge their differences. Pursuing this vision will not make women more free or equal, but instead will reduce them to legally indistinguishable "persons." That was the reason, in the end, why the public lost enthusiasm for the ERA. But the Court has decided it knows better and enacted ERA anyway. And what can "We, the People" do about it? Not much.

On the surface, the stated principle behind ERA seems fair and reasonable, and that is why, in the beginning, Congress and so many state legislatures were willing to embrace it. The ERA was supposed to give women the same constitutional protection as racial minorities. This was, in fact, one of the mobilizing issues for the formation of NOW in the late sixties. NOW co-founder Betty Friedan, writing in a 1976 epilogue to her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, said she and other feminists of that era conceived NOW as "an NAACP for women." They were especially incensed that, although Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race, no one seemed seriously occupied with the enforcement of women's rights.

To correct this imbalance, NOW made one of its earliest projects the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, originally proposed in 1923. The ERA would forbid sex discrimination exactly as other parts of the Constitution forbid race discrimination. According to Friedan, the ERA "had been bottled up in Congress for nearly fifty years," and "we had to take the torch of equality from the lonely, bitter old women who had been fighting all alone."

They fought alone for good reason. Most people recognized that legally equating sex with race would inhibit states from making any distinctions, no matter how reasonable, based on sex, and discourage states from enacting laws helpful to women. For unlike skin color—a superficial characteristic utterly irrelevant to merit or performance—sex, when it does matter, matters a great deal. Men and women share many of the same human characteristics and in many ways are equally capable, but they also differ in significant (and physically obvious) ways.

The Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment provides, "No state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Obviously many laws classify and treat people differently; in the past, laws treating women differently from men

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often operated to the woman's advantage. Because of the inevitable economic sacrifices a mother makes to raise her children, for instance, a woman could once generally expect to get custody of her children and be awarded both alimony and child support if her husband left her. Widows used to be favored with higher pensions than widowers.

The Equal Protection Clause was aimed at race discrimination, yet because it is phrased so broadly, the question arose whether states may treat *any* person, race aside, differently from another. The courts determined early on that the Equal Protection Clause permits legal distinctions between persons as long as the different treatment is rationally related to a legitimate purpose—the "rational basis" test. In practice, Equal Protection cases (other than those involving race or national origin) seldom overturned democratically enacted laws unless they were truly arbitrary, lacking any plausible reason.

As an example, consider laws regulating lawyers. Early in the history of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional to deny bar admission to blacks. The Court has, however, upheld the right of states to demand other reasonable qualifications as a condition of being licensed to practice law. In the case of women, the Court held that concern for their delicate sensibilities (essentially the only reason offered) was not a rational basis for denying admission to the bar.

The "rational basis" test stood for over a hundred years. Then came the 1971 case of *Reed* v. *Reed*, which involved a mother and father who each wanted to be named as executor of the estate of their deceased son, who was a minor. When a person dies without a will naming an executor, it is necessary to appoint someone to administer the estate. This involves paying bills, making an inventory of the deceased person's property, and distributing what's left to the legal heirs. As a practical matter, the real duties of an executor or administrator usually consist of signing checks and forms prepared by a hired lawyer. State laws governing the appointment of administrators usually give preference to next-of-kin, in a prescribed sequence (spouse, children, parents, siblings, etc.). Under the challenged Idaho law, whenever two equally entitled candidates of opposite sexes desired appointment, the man was preferred. Mrs. Reed, rejected in favor of her estranged husband as administrator of her son's estate, took her claim to the Supreme Court.

As its "rational basis" for this law, the state submitted that the automatic preference served to expedite estate proceedings, avoid the cost of hearings, and minimize intra-family disputes. But the Supreme Court unanimously declared the Idaho law unconstitutional, saying there was no rational basis for automatically preferring the man if both candidates were qualified. The Court called this "the very kind of arbitrary legislative choice forbidden" by the Equal Protection Clause. It declared, in essence, that reason doesn't matter when sex is involved.

Giving preference to male candidates might not have been the fairest possible method of appointing administrators, but it could hardly be called irrational. Holding hearings in each contested case might be more fair, but also time-consuming, expensive, and divisive—factors legislators should be entitled to consider. Flipping a coin might have been fairer, as well as cheaper and friendlier, but completely unpredictable and truly arbitrary. Idaho's elected legislature passed this law for reasons that were, at the time, good and sufficient to the men and women of Idaho.

But when the Court called Idaho's law "arbitrary," what it really meant to say was "not modern." If the people of Idaho objected to their old-fashioned laws, they had the simple remedy of electing legislators who would amend them. In fact, the people of Idaho did exactly that. Several months before the Supreme Court issued its decision, the Idaho legislature revised its probate code and eliminated the mandatory preference complained of in *Reed*. The Supreme Court could have declared the case moot and let the new law stand on its own; instead, all nine justices decided to substitute their judgment for that of the people of Idaho.

Indeed many, if not a majority, of the voters in Idaho were women. Though they might have appreciated the Court's sentiments, they should have been wary of the Court's usurpation of a right far more important than the "right" to be appointed as an estate administrator, namely the right of the people to govern themselves.

But the Court was planning to go further. Only two years after *Reed*, the Court came within one vote of judicially adopting the ERA. The case of *Frontiero* v. *Richardson* (1973) involved laws requiring military women's husbands, in order to qualify

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for dependent benefits, to show that they actually depended on their wives for more than half of their support. As in *Reed*, the Defense Department offered many reasons for its policy, but eight justices voted to invalidate the policy because, under *Reed*, those reasons weren't considered rational. Only Justice Rehnquist dissented.

Four justices (Brennan, Douglas, Marshall, and White), anticipating passage of the ERA, voted to judge sex classifications by the same strict standard as race classifications. Four other justices (Burger, Blackmun, Powell, and Stewart) refused to go so far. Criticizing his brethren's rush to judicial adoption of the ERA, Justice Powell warned that some issues "normally should be resolved by the elected representatives of the people," and when they are not, "democratic institutions are weakened, and confidence in the restraint of the Court is impaired."

Ruth Bader Ginsburg had represented the plaintiff in *Reed*, argued *Frontiero*, and returned for a rematch in the 1976 Supreme Court case of *Craig* v. *Boren*. This case challenged an Oklahoma law prohibiting the sale of 3.2 percent beer to males under twenty-one and females under eighteen years old. The state presented abundant evidence that teenage boys were far more likely than teenage girls to drink, drive, and have accidents. Then-ACLU lawyer Ruth Bader Ginsburg contended that this law, even though it was "rational" and apparently favored women, violated the Equal Protection Clause simply because it treated women and men differently.

This time she got a five-justice majority to agree that the old "rational basis" standard shouldn't apply when sex is involved. The Supreme Court held in *Craig* that the proper test for constitutionality of a sex classification under the Equal Protection Clause is not whether it has a rational basis but whether it is substantially related to the achievement of an important governmental objective. This test became known as the "intermediate scrutiny" standard, as distinguished from the "strict scrutiny" standard applicable to race. After *Craig*, "gender" was firmly established as a specially protected category under the Equal Protection Clause.

Interestingly, the Court used the term "gender" rather than "sex" in *Craig* and in subsequent opinions for many years thereafter. When Justice Ginsburg's nomination to the Supreme Court was about to be confirmed, she claimed to the *Washington Post* that it was she who invented this terminology in the 1970s. Her secretary, it seems, was uncomfortable typing the word "sex" over and over in legal briefs, so Ginsburg substituted the more delicate sounding "gender." This was grammatically incorrect: "gender" is a property of nouns and adjectives, masculine, feminine, and neuter (as in Latin or French). But it was a revealing action on Ginsburg's part, showing she is imperiously willing to overrule the English language itself when it gets in her way.

THE NEW "INTERMEDIATE scrutiny" standard, however, raised more questions than it answered. Justice Rehnquist dissented in *Craig*, saying, "How is this Court to divine what objectives are important? ... I would have thought that, if this Court were to leave anything to decision by the popularly elected branches of the Government, ... it would be the decision as to what governmental objectives to be achieved by law are 'important,' and which are not." Fans of Justice Ginsburg say her involvement in *Craig* shows her impartiality toward both men and women. This is because they regard *Craig* as a victory for men. In fact it was a victory for the beer vendors of Oklahoma (also party to the case), who won the right to sell 3.2 beer to thirsty teenage males. Conversely it was a sad defeat for parents and highway patrolmen, who surely felt they had good reason to try to put a few roadblocks between driving-age boys and beer.

In any case, the "intermediate scrutiny" test adopted in *Craig* held up for twenty years. Perversely, but exactly as predicted by opponents of the ERA, intermediate scrutiny of laws classifying persons by "gender" yielded several more victories for men (or defeats for women, depending on how one chooses to look at it). In *Mississippi University for Women* v. *Hogan* (1982), for example, the Court ordered Mississippi's only all-female state nursing school to admit men, even though men had access to other state-supported nursing schools that were already co-ed. Barring men from even one nursing school, the Court said, would make Mississippi guilty of perpetuating the "stereotype" of nursing as a women's career. Time and again, the Court went on to strike down perfectly sensible laws that were either harmless or positively beneficial to women. Each "gender" case afforded the Court another opportunity, as Justice Scalia once wrote, "simply to pay conspicuous obeisance to the equality of the sexes."

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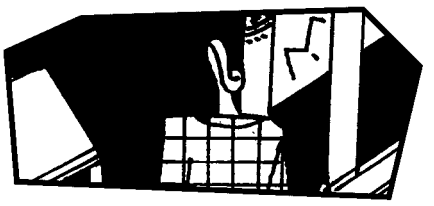
It wasn't until last year, though, that the Supreme Court was given its most tantalizing opportunity yet to enact fully the remaining agenda of the ERA, in the Virginia Military Institute case, *U.S.* v. *Virginia.* Never mind the pale imitation of sexual equality that the four old men wanted to hand over in *Frontiero.* The *VMI* case afforded feminists a clear shot at eradicating the patriarchy by eliminating a 157-year-old, all-male college. VMI was an all-purpose target, being masculine, military, traditional, and Southern. Although lower courts agreed that single-sex programs are pedagogically valid, legitimate, and beneficial within a public education system, the Supreme Court tossed out all the expert evidence supporting those findings.

Now-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote the *VMI* decision, which ratcheted up the existing legal standard for any sex-based state action to require "an exceedingly persuasive justification." No justification is acceptable if it relies on "overbroad generalizations about the different talents, capacities, or preferences of males and females." Under Justice Ginsburg's formula, a generalization is deemed overbroad if *any* individual might prove to be an exception to it.

So stated, the new test effectively enacts the ERA. Under the formulation in the *VMI* case, the only permissible legal distinctions between women and men would have to involve the required use of genitalia. The occupation of "sperm donor" could be limited to (biological) men. "Birth mother" could be limited to women, but perhaps not "wet nurse" (after all, many modern young dads are quite adept at administering a baby bottle).

In championing the absolute rights of individuals, however, Justice Ginsburg did not fail to consider the interests of one group: women. Writing the *VMI* opinion, she carefully reserved the right of government to take action to "compensate women for 'economic disabilities' they have suffered." She also provided that nothing "may be used...to create or perpetuate the legal, social, and economic inferiority of women."



TO WHOM MIGHT women be inferior? It can only be men. Unlike racial minorities, which are numerous and, with increasing intermarriage, no longer discrete, the sexes are only two and exist in a closed system. For women not to be inferior, as Ginsburg insists, they must be either equal or superior to men—or perhaps "more equal" as the pigs in Orwell's *Animal Farm* would have it. The old ERA modestly, if vaguely, aimed to achieve equality between the sexes; the new Equal Protection regime rejects any sense of fair play or give-and-take between men and women by promising protection to women exclusively. This might satisfy ideologues, but realists bear in mind there are two sexes, both necessary to carry on the human race. On that score, Justice Ginsburg's *VMI* decision calls *la différence* "cause for celebration, but not...for artificial constraints on an individual's opportunity." A future Court could easily use such language to permit or require states to sanction homosexual marriages. For how could we deny two individuals the opportunity to marry merely because they lack complementary sex organs?

Homosexual marriage isn't legal yet, but what other dire predictions of old ERA opponents remain unfulfilled? Not many. Women still aren't drafted, but neither are men today. In peacetime, the number one military readiness problem seems to be pregnancy, followed closely by sexual harassment.

Indeed, the last thirty years have yielded mixed results for women as a group. Elites—those with the brains and money to attend college and pursue a career—have succeeded spectacularly. Others—those less talented, and often imprudent or unlucky in love (or sex)—are economically far worse off and far greater in number. Their misfortunes are depressingly familiar, the same things our antediluvian, pre-1960s mothers warned us against: unwanted pregnancies, single motherhood, poverty, and welfare dependency.

These problems are exacerbated by a law that, in the name of equality, refuses to acknowledge sexual distinctions between men and women. The protections and special status the law once afforded mothers and wives because of their unique, biological sacrifices have been taken away; from a legal point of view they are now simply "spouses" judged on a par with men. We cannot estimate how many programs beneficial to women may have been curtailed or rejected (particularly in education) because of the cost or impracticality of providing the same for men. It works the other way around, too. Many states have cut back or eliminated successful all-male "boot camp" criminal rehabilitation programs because the states can't afford to run a parallel program for a relatively small number of female convicts. As a result, more young male offenders

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are released unrehabilitated—with predictably adverse effects on their future victims.

The interests of "women" are hardly advanced if they must live in a dysfunctional society. A society cannot function if it cannot make rules based on reason, experience, and the collective wisdom of its people. Sound rules are exactly what America's founders intended to accomplish through majority rule in a free society. The Supreme Court does none of us a favor when it subverts this intent.

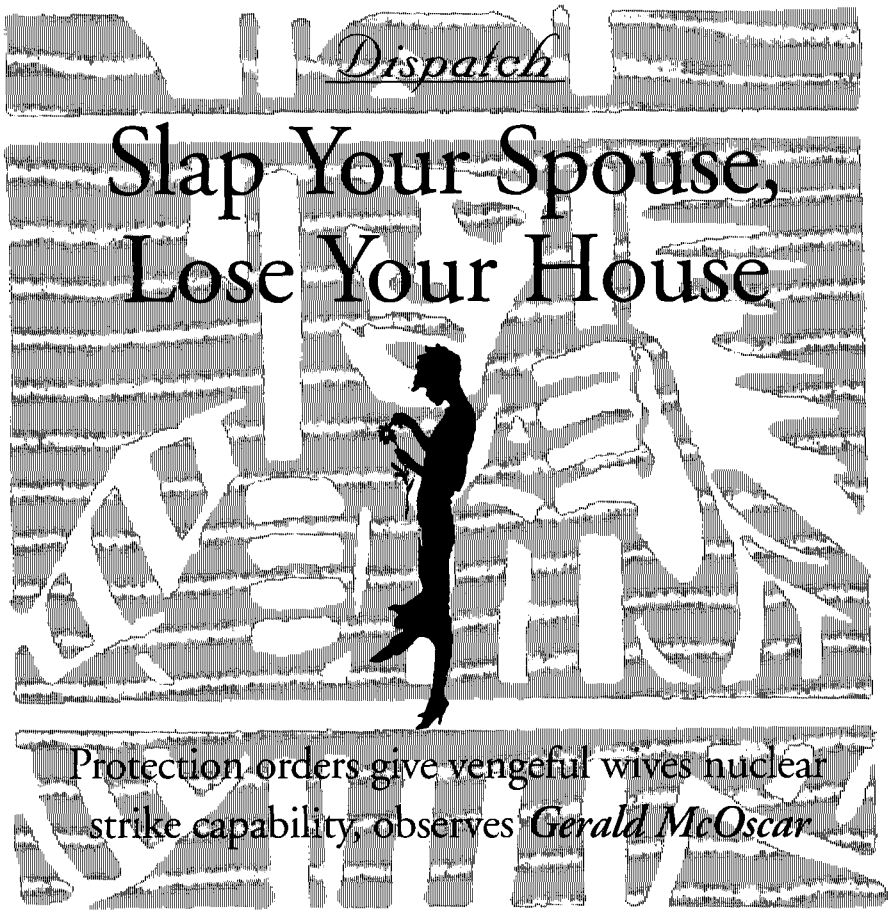
Justice Scalia, dissenting in the *VMI* case, wrote: "The virtue of a democratic system with a First Amendment is that it readily enables the people, over time, to be persuaded that what they took for granted is not so, and to change their laws accordingly. That system is destroyed if the smug assurances of each age are removed from the democratic process and written into the Constitution. So to counterbalance the Court's criticism of our ancestors, let me say a word in their praise: they left us free to change. The same cannot be said of this most illiberal Court, which has embarked on a course of inscribing one after another of the current preferences of the society (and in some cases only the counter-majoritarian preferences of the society's law-trained elite) into our Basic Law."

The real tragedy of the elite feminists' fifth column march through the Constitution is that it has left us—by which I mean all of us, women and men—no more equal, but considerably less free. ◆

Anita K. Blair, executive vice president and general counsel of the Independent Women's Forum, serves on the VMI Board of Visitors.

Dispatch

Slap Your Spouse, Lose Your House



Protection orders give vengeful wives nuclear strike capability, observes *Gerald McOscar*

West Chester, Pennsylvania

Critics of Philadelphia's Police Department applauded when a new, smaller, and lighter "official" flashlight was issued to its officers. The old, heavy, club-like flashlight had become a "weapon of opportunity" in the hands of officers and suspects alike.

The same could be said about Pennsylvania's Protection from Abuse Act, a well-intentioned and useful weapon in the fight against domestic violence, but all too often a "weapon of opportunity" in the hands of vengeful spouses and opportunistic lawyers seeking to gain the upper hand in divorce and custody cases. Indeed indiscriminate use of the act, which allows a wife to obtain a "protection order" against her potentially violent mate, may be fueling the domestic violence it was designed to quell. As a result, many women are unwittingly discovering that taking out a protection order against their husbands or lovers may actually incite violence—sometimes with tragic consequences.

The recent murders of several Philadelphia-area women by their ex-husbands and lovers occurred within days or weeks of protection orders being issued. Stefan Stromberg and her mother were stabbed to death last April by Stefan's husband, Larry Stromberg, just two days after her protection order became final. That same month, Sheila Cody, a twenty-six-year-old Norristown resident, was stabbed to death in her home despite the protection order issued the previous February. In June, Kirk Harris, 32, first turned a gun on his two-year-old son, Tivan, then himself, despite a protection order. In

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October and November, at least three more Philadelphia women were murdered despite protection orders.

The Stromberg case is typical. Larry Stromberg's parents told reporters that he had never been in trouble until he met Stefan. In their eyes, he was a devoted husband and she an unfaithful wife. Neither side denies her extra-marital affair and abortion, nor that she penned her husband a love letter even after he had been served with the protection order. Stefan's attorney, meanwhile, blasted media coverage of the tragedy as "irresponsible at best and dangerous at worst." She denounced Larry Stromberg's family for attempting to blame the dead wife for his abusive behavior, and worried that people would think that protection orders are useless pieces of paper. But she misses the point.

Protection orders are, in fact, effective in most cases (intimidation is an effective deterrent), but that doesn't mean they're appropriate in most cases. If Larry Stromberg was violent, as Stefan's lawyer alleges, he should have been in jail. If he was simply distraught over a crumbling marriage and an unfaithful wife, why was he being punished? We may never know whether the protection order pushed him over the edge, but if the end seems sadly preordained in some of these cases, it may be the indiscriminate use of protection orders that makes it so.

So common are accounts of women being beaten (or worse) after obtaining protection orders that plans are afoot in Pennsylvania to make it an aggravating circumstance to intentionally violate an order and take a life in the process—essentially allowing for the imposition of the death penalty in first-degree murder cases. In the words of one suburban county district attorney, "this happens more frequently than you would think. The people who are supposed to be protected are being killed, and our purpose ... is to prevent the killing."

The problem may not be that the law doesn't work, but that it works too well. Protection orders are intentionally convenient, cheap, and easy to obtain; but convenient, cheap, and easy justice comes at a price. The act contains civil remedies for criminal behavior ("bodily injury," "imminent serious bodily injury," "rape," "spousal assault"), but lacks the due process guarantees, the moral authority, and the persuasive force of the criminal law. A protection order is a legal hybrid, neither fish nor fowl.

Thus, a plaintiff who alleges immediate and present danger of abuse may, without a court hearing, be granted "such temporary order as [the court] deems necessary to protect the plaintiff or minor children," including "granting possession to the plaintiff of the residence ... to the exclusion of the defendant by evicting the defendant ...." In layman's terms, a spouse or lover can find himself out on the street on nothing more than the word of an angry partner. By the time a hearing is held, reputations, careers, and families may be in ruin. Insult is added to injury when the charges are later dropped or dismissed (as is often the case).

Rarely is one person wholly to blame when a relationship turns sour, but in most cases it is the man who finds himself out on the street. The act expressly directs courts to offer assistance and advice to the accusers, but no such assistance is offered the accused. The army of counselors, advocates, and clerks who have become gatekeepers to the courthouse in abuse cases routinely counsel their clients on the finer points of the law. While such practices ensure job security and continued funding in the war against domestic violence, they do little to instill confidence in the justice system—indeed, a whole industry owes its existence to domestic violence.

To eager advocates, "imminent serious bodily injury" can mean anything from a raised voice to a clenched fist. The lexicon of domestic violence now includes such vague terms as "verbal" and "psychological" abuse. One attorney routinely asks her clients, "How did this [the husband's behavior] make you *feel?*" Predictably, vagueness leads to subjectivity, rarely the best measure of another's guilt. Is "I'll kill you, bitch!" a curse, an expletive, a threat, or verbal abuse? Is a shoving match between father and son over the son's late hours an expression of loving concern, parental discipline, or abuse? No one knows for sure anymore.

Whatever its form, violence usually begets violence. Justice that doesn't contain some measure of restraint, fairness, common sense, and compassion isn't justice at all, just another form of abuse. Protection orders aren't the only weapon in the war against domestic violence. Lawyers, judges, and advocates have a wide range of options at their disposal, from criminal law at one end of the spectrum to counseling and mediation at the other. They need only set aside their predilections, prejudices, and political agendas and choose the legal weapon best suited for the circumstances. ●

Gerald McOscar is an attorney in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

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Don't Pay Too Much for Sex

You're not helping to advance the cause of women—or your own net worth—by investing in the new, politically correct mutual funds, warns *James K. Glassman*

When Linda Pei returned to San Francisco in 1991 after spending a decade in Asia as a management consultant, she was appalled that women hadn't risen higher on the corporate ladder. "We made up only five percent of corporate managers in the Fortune 500," she said. "Nothing had changed." So she came up with an idea to help crack the "glass ceiling"—a term which, she told me, she hadn't ever heard during her years abroad.

In October 1993, she started the Women's Equity Fund, a mutual fund which, according to its official description, owns the stocks of companies that "exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: fair treatment of employees, sensitivity to minority issues, environmental sensitivity, strong career-development programs for women, women in top executive positions, a high percentage of women directors on the board, positive images of women in advertising, and use of women-owned vendors." In addition, the fund would try to use its leverage as a shareholder to pressure laggard companies to behave better.

As you might expect, the Women's Equity Fund hasn't done too well at cracking ceilings—although Pei has had some friendly conversations with various executives. It's a little silly to think that any mutual fund is going to affect the corporate policies of, say, Exxon—certainly not a fund with just $4.5 million in assets. Women's Equity has another problem: its managers have had a penchant for buying stocks and then quickly selling them. The turnover rate in 1995 was an astronomical 706 percent. That means that the fund held a stock on average for just two months. "It's difficult to pressure a company to improve unless one is a consistent shareholder," says Laura Lallos, an analyst with Morningstar, Inc., the Chicago-based research firm.

But a much bigger problem is that the Women's Equity Fund is doing a lousy job for its own shareholders. That's a shame because the best way a mutual fund can help women (or men for that matter) is to make them richer—giving them the money and the time to pursue a better life, to send their daughters to graduate school, or to give their earnings to good causes. Women's Equity has missed the bull market. Over the three years ending in mid-February, it had returned forty-six percent in dividends and price gains, compared with eighty percent for the Standard & Poor's 500 Stock Index, a measure of the broad market. Women's Equity ranks a dismal 1,095th among 1,354 stock funds tracked by Lipper Analytical Services.

In 1994, the fund lost money. In 1995, a year the S&P returned thirty-seven percent, Women's Equity returned just seventeen percent. That year, Pei replaced her original fund manager—a man!—with Cheryl Smith, a vice president with U.S. Trust Co. in Boston (a job she retains). Smith hasn't been a great improvement. In 1996, the fund returned fourteen percent, compared with twenty-three percent for the S&P. "The fund," says Lallos, "has been quite a disappointment."

What's the problem? Has Women's Equity missed the big bucks because of its scruples? Absolutely not. The fund's fifty-five stocks are familiar names that grace the portfolios of hundreds of its competitors. Large holdings (meaning around $100,000 each) include Coca-Cola, Avon

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Products, Unum Corp. (an insurer), Bank of Boston, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, Gillette, McDonald's, Schering-Plough (pharmaceuticals), Fannie Mae (mortgage finance), and May Department Stores. Pei did not tell me which companies the fund would have bought if they hadn't been screened out (tobacco, oil, and communications companies are the only groups conspicuously absent), but the choices have not been severely limited.

Women's Equity, in fact, is following the pattern of other mutual funds that invest in a "socially conscious" fashion. Traditionally, they perform poorly. In 1996, for example, only five of the forty-four "socially and environmentally responsible" funds tracked by the *GreenMoney Journal* beat the S&P 500, and none beat the Dow Jones Industrials. But the reason is not the moral restrictions the funds place on themselves. It's much simpler: these funds just don't tend to attract the best managers. That shouldn't be a surprise. Wall Street doesn't consider social investing a serious pursuit, and neither do most investors, which means social funds are destined to stay small.

The best such fund in recent years is Domini Social Equity, which rates an impressive four stars (out of five) from Morningstar. But Domini simply owns the four hundred stocks that make up its own index, which was compiled by first excluding companies involved in arms-making, tobacco, alcohol, and gambling, and then looking at "positive factors, such as workplace diversity, community relations, and environmental responsibility." The final list is top-heavy with big companies like Merck & Co., Intel, Procter & Gamble, and Wal-Mart. But the key to Domini's success is that its manager doesn't make any decisions. The portfolio is set, except for a handful of stocks that drop off the index or move onto it. In 1996, turnover was five percent, compared with 121 percent for Women's Equity. Buy-and-hold policies really work—especially when you can't attract an ace manager. In 1995, Domini returned thirty-five percent; last year, twenty-two percent.

Social investing is derided on Wall Street as a pursuit for tree-huggers, sissies, and radical feminists. That's a little harsh. I don't want to invest in companies that do bad things, especially when there are so many other choices. But why cede such moral decisions to a mutual fund manager who uses guidelines in a prospectus? I'll do it myself, thanks.

But women are afflicted by a particular investing disease. In a study in the *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning*, two economists from Colorado State University recently wrote, "An increasing number of financial studies conclude that women invest their asset portfolios more conservatively than their male counterparts." Research consistently shows that women generally are more risk-averse than men—and that's not a bad trait, as long as the risks are real and worth avoiding. In investing, women tend to choose investments (such as bonds or money-market funds) which they think are safer than stocks but which really aren't over the long run.

In the short term, stocks are extremely risky. But if you hold them for ten years or more (and you shouldn't be seriously investing in the stock market unless you're in for the long term), they are not much riskier than bonds—and they return, history shows, an average of eleven percent annually. The best way to help women as investors (and men too) is to encourage them to stash their money in top-notch stock mutual funds for a long time.

That said, some of the best funds—glass ceiling or no—are actually run by women. One of the best-known is Elizabeth Bramwell, who managed the Gabelli Growth Fund for seven years, then left to start her own firm. She now runs Bramwell Growth as well as a small-company fund, Selected Special. Christine Baxter is co-manager of PBHG Emerging Growth, a five-star fund that has returned an average of twenty-eight percent annually over the past three years, or seven points better than the S&P. Judith Vale, manager of Neuberger & Berman Genesis Fund, earned thirty-four percent for her shareholders last year, ranking her in the top four percent of all stock funds (and beating the number one social fund by nine percentage points). Elizabeth Dater runs Warburg-Pincus Emerging Growth, a $1.2 billion fund with a solid long-term record, and Susan Black co-manages the same firm's Capital Appreciation Fund, which has beaten the S&P for the past two years—no mean trick.

Whoever runs it, a mutual fund's purpose is to make money for its shareholders. That's a noble aim, especially if the shareholders do good things with the money. The folks who run Women's Equity would be smart to concentrate on this first task. It's tough enough. ◆

James K. Glassman, who is the DeWitt Wallace–Reader's Digest fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, writes a weekly financial column for the Washington Post.

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And Here's to You, Mrs. Robinson

John A. Barnes praises older women

BEFORE THERE WAS *The Rules*, there were the rules. Once upon a time, women didn't have to buy books to find out what they were. Their mothers (and their fathers, too) taught them. Fortunately, many of these women are still to be found. And for the youngish man who desires a break from dealing with his own generation's poor imitation and wants a taste of the real thing, they are worth seeking out. I am talking, of course, about older women.

Discussion of the entire subject of younger men and older women is one burdened with "Mrs. Robinson" stereotypes, not to mention the Oedipal baggage. (Though interestingly, the same seems not to hold true in continental Europe, where the idea of an older woman initiating a younger man into sex is considered positively civilized.) It's also true that there are not a few first-generation feminists around who have found themselves involuntarily consigned to the First Wives Club and are not at all pleasant to be near.

But from my own personal experience, and that of a surprising number of men I know, women in their forties and fifties who were raised before the age of women's liberation have a certain something that younger men find very attractive. In fact, if a woman of today's generation really wants to know the secret of snagging a man, she could do worse than to put that popular book down and take a look at how an old pro gets the job done.

First, let's dispel a few stereotypes. The two older women with whom I have been involved had successful careers. One owned her own business and the other was an advertising sales manager. These were not the classic bored suburban housewives looking for a thrill. By the same token, the man who finds himself being pulled toward a relationship with an older woman may indeed be having problems with women of his own age, but that might not necessarily be his own fault.

It's an unfortunate fact that younger men just starting out in life frequently aren't attractive to women of their peer group. The more educated and professional the woman, the more pronounced this problem becomes. Such women often have their sights set on much bigger game. The young female associate at the law firm has little incentive to date a male associate when the high rate of divorce among successful older men puts a partner easily within reach. Why risk struggling to build a life with a younger man when you can have it all immediately? Needless to say, the overwhelming majority of these would-be trophy wives end up disappointed, but they spend so long in the hunt that by the time they hit their mid-thirties, it's hardly surprising that so many become angry and resentful—and consequently, unattractive.

Older women, by contrast, usually have a sense of perspective that these younger women lack. Their jobs are important to them, but they often have grown children of their own to remind them that work and career are not the be-all and end-all of existence. Unlike so many younger single women, the older woman is not relentlessly focused on her own needs and her own career to the exclusion of everything else. But most important, older women just plain like and appreciate men in a way younger women seem not to do. The older women I know, even those who have been through traumatic divorces, do not attribute the faults and foibles of their former husbands to the entire species. They tend to see men as individuals rather than as members of a group, as complementary to women rather than hostile competitors to be tolerated at best and scorned at worst.

Older women also see relationships as a two-way street. They inquire after you and your well-being in a much more sincere and caring manner than many of their younger counterparts. Older women also bring a perspective to sexual matters that younger women often lack. The twenty-something woman who dragged me to see *The Bridges of Madison County,* which celebrates an adulterous affair, was weeping buckets of tears by the final credits. Many older women whom I consulted were repelled by the way Meryl Streep's character treated her faithful, if pedestrian, husband. Adultery, as many of them knew from experience, invariably ends in tears of a very different sort.

So you can shell out good money for *The Rules* if you want to, ladies. Or you can have a long chat with your mother about how she snagged your dad. ●

John A. Barnes is an editorialist at the New York Post.

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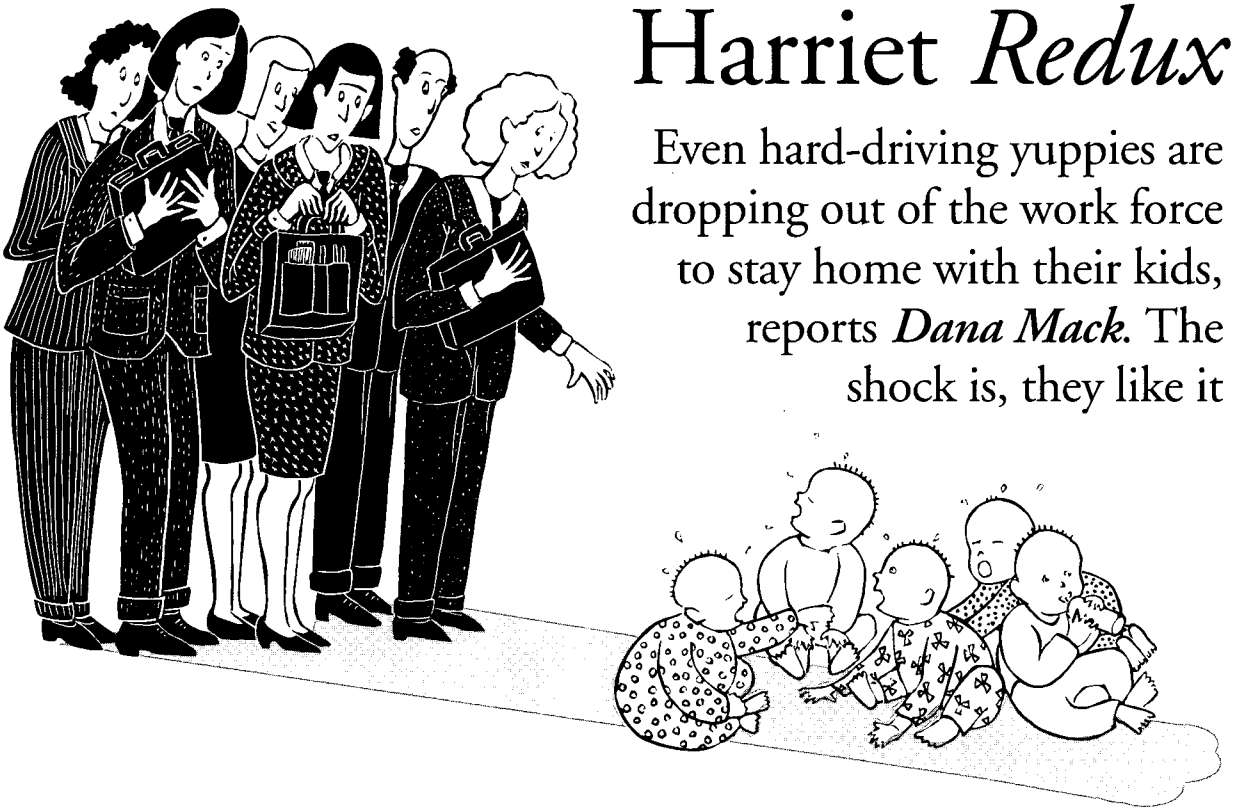
Ozzie and Harriet *Redux*

Even hard-driving yuppies are dropping out of the work force to stay home with their kids, reports *Dana Mack.* The shock is, they like it



As part of a fourth-grade assignment, my daughter was asked to interview one of her parents about his or her job. She chose to interview my husband whose job, by many people's standards, is considered unusual: he is a house-husband. I was not present for their conversations but I was amused to read in my daughter's finished report that my husband experiences "high job satisfaction," and that what he "likes best about his work" is the growing number of male and female colleagues: at-home parents.

The National Center for Fathering notes that the total number of at-home dads with working wives came to 3,385,000 in 1991, and that twenty percent of preschoolers that year were in "father care"—a jump of five percent since 1986. This is not necessarily because the dads are unemployed or laid off. A new survey on the guys once deprecatingly referred to as "Mr. Mom" was released in 1996 by DePaul University's Robert Frank and Roosevelt University's Michael Helford. The survey focused on 371 men who spent at least thirty hours per week taking care of their children. Most were home by choice. A father from Georgia who quit his job as a teacher to stay home with his kids explained that neither he nor his wife liked "having to take the kids to day care every day and hearing second-hand what new progress they had made." Another father, an electrical engineer, said, "I quit my ... job eighteen months ago and haven't looked back.... [W]e had a seventeen-year-old daughter, a five-year-old son, and a six-month-old son we had adopted. The baby was in day care. My wife made more than sixty percent of the household income. More than half of my share went to day care and before and after care. What's wrong with this picture?"

These dads are joining the increasing numbers of that other non-traditional parent—the driven career woman—who are quitting their jobs to be with their kids, only to discover that not only is it worth the sacrifice, but they actually find it more satisfying than going to the office. Of the 350 at-home mothers interviewed by Darcie Sanders and Martha B. Mullen for their 1992 book *Staying Home*, many identified "being my own boss" as among the principal ben-

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efits of being at home. But while they complained, too, of isolation and the feeling that society did not value the work of at-home mothers, clearly the benefits outweighed the drawbacks: 59.5 percent noted that staying at home had a "positive effect on their self-image;" seventy-five percent observed improvements in their relationships in their marriage. A significant number claimed their spouses helped more with child care and household tasks than they had before. A whopping 97.8 percent said that if they could "revise history" they would "choose again to stay home" with their children; and although almost three-quarters of the women had professional training, and college or graduate-level degrees, more than sixty percent of them had no firm plans to go back into the labor force. They had chosen their work, liked it, and were not terribly anxious to give it up—except, perhaps, in order to go back to school.

For most families, the financial sacrifices of at-home parenting are probably greater than these women reported. Respondents to the Frank and Helford survey, which encompassed at-home moms as well as at-home dads, reported that when fathers stay home it costs the average family about $26,600 a year in income; when mothers stay home, about $24,000. Nevertheless, a growing number of families are making the decision to renounce second incomes, either wholly or partially, for the sake of their children's well-being. Of nearly fourteen million couples with children where both work for pay, reports the National Center for Fathering, only a little more than five million work full-time, day-shift jobs.

It's hard to get at the real numbers of women who are leaving the work force because the Department of Labor counts as "working women" those who work for pay as little as one hour per week and those who work without remuneration in family businesses or farming fifteen or more hours a week. But in a 1994 interview, National Bureau of Labor economist Howard Hayghe said that the trend to at-home mothering was palpable in the large numbers of women who were "finding alternative methods of employment that are allowing them to stay home more with their children. They're finding part-time work, home-based businesses, and freelance work." Support organizations for at-home mothers confirm Hayghe's analysis, asserting that a large proportion of their members do earn at least some money. Mary James, of the 325-chapter MOMS Club, claims that fifty-eight of the sixty women in her chapter alone did some work for pay from home. But these organizations also report surges in their membership—women who clearly regard their primary "job" as mother and housewife and are consciously making the transition from work to home. Between 1994 and 1996, for example, the membership of Formerly Employed Mothers at the Leading Edge (FEMALE) nearly doubled, as did Mothers of Preschoolers International between 1991 and 1994.

This increase in at-home parenting by both women and men reflects a large and rather sudden attitudinal shift among Americans. For more than two decades the number of women who claimed they would quit their jobs to stay home with their children if they could afford it held steady at about thirty percent. Suddenly, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that number rose to fifty-six percent. As we have seen, an even larger percentage of Americans believe children do best when their mothers are home. A 1991 poll of fathers found that seventy-five percent would exchange fast career advancement for more family time, and a 1987 *Fortune* survey found thirty percent had done so. In 1993, a Voter/Consumer Research poll sponsored by the Family Research Council revealed that most working people would trade even early retirement for more time to devote to raising children.

This attitudinal shift has been labeled by family scholars and journalists "the New Familism." Barbara Dafoe Whitehead summarizes its implications succinctly: "[The] generation that invented singlehood as a 'lifestyle,' that cohabited and delayed marriage and childbearing ... [that] a decade ago ... were some of the most committed exponents of careerism ... has now settled down into family life. If there is a single common experience that contributes to the New Familism, it is parenthood. More and more parents of young children are realizing that work life and family life conflict, that time is scarcer than money, and that time and attention are the chief currencies of family life."

The New Familism has indeed meant a significant philosophical shift for baby boomers—a shift, as Whitehead notes, that separates parents from non-parents and challenges a constellation of self-actualization theories that are still propagated by much of the intellectual elite. Typical of these is the work of psychotherapist and Radcliffe Affiliate Scholar Rosalind C. Barnett and Boston University journalism professor Caryl Rivers, who in their 1996 book, *She Works/He Works: How Two-Income*

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Families are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off, advise women to "relax," trust the child care industry, and go fulfill themselves in the workplace. Parents, they insist, worry unnecessarily about their children, harbor unrealistic expectations of "perfection" as parents, and are unnecessarily "concerned" about "disaffection" in family life. Were they to think more about themselves and less about kids, everyone would be better off. Women who don't work, they remind us, have higher chances of suffering depression and low self-esteem.

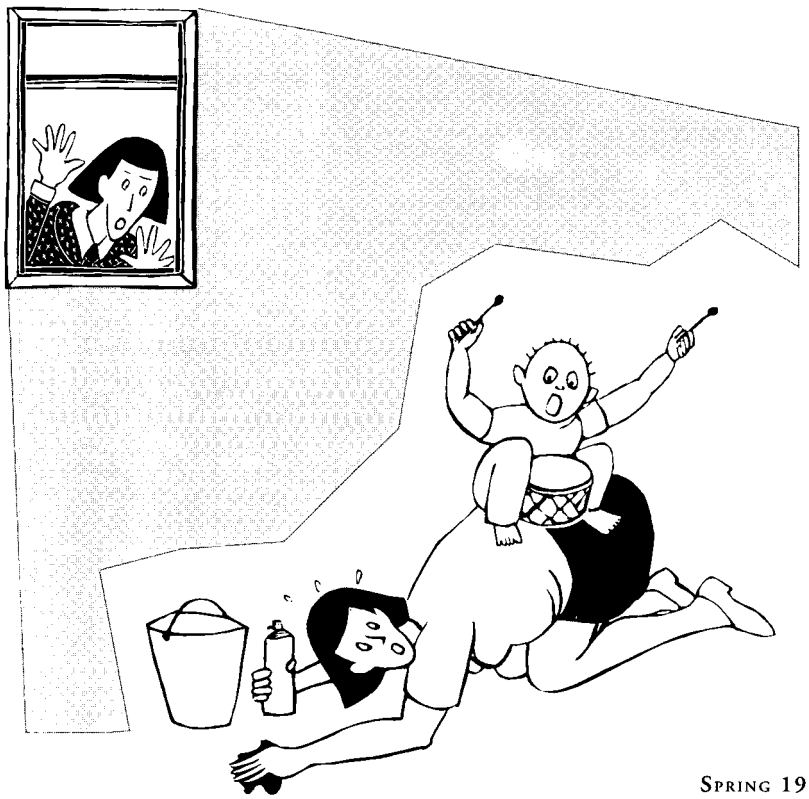
But parents no longer cotton to the argument that just because "in other cultures where children have many caretakers they do just fine," they will do just fine in our culture, or that staying home means surrendering to financial dependence, boredom, frustration, depression, and low self-esteem. Many mothers assert that if it is indeed true that at-home mothers are more susceptible to depression than working mothers, the solution may not be continued participation in the labor force but increased social supports that diminish the isolation of at-home parenting.

Debbie Sawicki, an Illinois mother and national director of FEMALE, says her organization is particularly concerned with resurrecting the image of at-home mothering as socially productive work. "What we are doing, what every at-home mother does, is more important than running a Fortune 500 company," Sawicki says. "It is a tall order to raise children in this society." Easing the tension between work and home, and bolstering the self-esteem of at-home mothers, are only a few of FEMALE's aims. It also advocates family-friendly workplace policies—including job-sharing, part-time hiring, flex-time, and flex-place arrangements—and sponsors play groups as well as activities for mothers, like book discussion groups. "Our main focus is on mothers as women, and not as mothers," says Sawicki. "We see that a lot of women need the company of other adults once in awhile without their children, something they don't get a lot of at home."

Other organizations, such as MOMS, Mothers at Home, and Lawyers at Home, are making efforts to rescue at-home mothering from its image as socially and intellectually lightweight. MOMS, a California-based organization started in 1983, encourages its member chapters to engage in service projects for the community. The National MothersCare Network, a federation of full-time mothers' groups, was formed in 1994 with the explicit purpose of acting "as a watchdog against what members feel are inaccurate and derogatory portrayals of stay-at-homers."

"There is a bogey woman out in the woods who, when we begin to doubt our gains, keeps us modern women in line," says Maggie Gallagher in her witty 1989 social critique of feminism, *Enemies of Eros.* "She has big, yellow, guilt-inducing eyes; her skin is hidden beneath a grotesque growth of polyester. She has the figure of a wounded penguin...and a wall-to-wall orange-carpeted ranch house cage [where] little screaming demons...slobber and spit up and destroy."

Advertisers have observed that the stay-at-home mother of today is hardly the "captive squirrel" of Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur,* caught in the "treadmill" of waxing and rewaxing her "intrinsically vinyl floor." Because she is more likely to have professional training or a career behind her, she is more sophisticated than her mother was; she dresses



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more fashionably, she exercises to stay in shape. She is likely to care far less than her own mother did about whether the kitchen floor shines or the front stoop is swept. She's "relaxed" about "scrubbing," notes Susan Small Weill, an advertising strategist with the Seiden Group who draws up campaigns trying to reach this woman, "because she's not home for that."

But if today's at-home mother is working hard to look like a good cultural fit—slim, healthy, relaxed, savvy, the kind of woman who might grace the cover of *Self*—she isn't one. She is a countercultural icon if there ever was one, living a countercultural trend. And she knows it. She is a woman whose major concern is not herself and her own advancement, but others and their advancement—a woman who refuses to bow to the social forces telling her, in the words of social critic Mary Eberstadt, to continue "putting children last."

Sanders and Bullen found out some interesting things about the women they interviewed who had returned home to raise their children after working. Only five percent said their workload or work schedule was a primary reason for quitting, and less than three percent listed concerns about finding or affording child care. The majority of respondents returned home because they "felt it was the best way to raise" their child (26.5 percent), because they "didn't want to miss" their children's childhood (22.7 percent), and because they wanted to raise their children with their "own values" (nineteen percent). Similarly, a 1993 survey of twenty-one thousand Canadian workers found that the most common reason women stated for quitting work was "not enough time with children."

Even women who report job satisfaction do not appear to be as emotionally attached to their work as men are. A 1995 survey by the Families and Work Institute found that fifty-five percent of American women bring

home half or more of the family earnings; but as the earning gap between working women and men closes, women still tend to put family first, both in their estimation of personal success and in their worries about work. Twenty-six percent of women respondents to the Families and Work Institute survey, for example, noted as chief among their work-related worries was either balancing work time with family time or dealing with the effect of work pressures on their families. In comparison, nineteen percent worried about benefits, and only ten percent about "lack of advancement opportunities for women."

Recent changes in the way parents balance work and family obligations are not the only indications of a New Familism. Other trends reflect a shift in parents' values. Family researchers and journalists have noted that divorce rates have leveled off and that many Americans are making special efforts to increase unstructured time spent with their children. More parents are "hanging out" with their children rather than arranging planned activities for them. And the family dinner—once thought on the verge of obsolescence—is making a comeback as a focal point of the day and a sacred arena for family interaction.

The 1995 Families and Work Institute survey found that two-thirds of families with children up through high school eat dinner together at least five times a week. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many families are consciously resurrecting the communal dinner after finding that their relationships had suffered from its absence. And those especially of the "baby bust" generation—the twenty-somethings reared in a culture of dual-income families and divorce—seem to be ardently rejecting what they consider to be the skewed values of career and self-obsessed parents. They insist they will make a serious commitment to marriage and to child-rearing.

In a March 1995 speech to the Council on Families in America, Rutgers University professor David Popenoe noted that several other pro-family social trends are emerging. First, there is a consensus among Americans that social programs such as welfare must be reformed in ways that encourage the rebuilding of intact families. Second, secularism has run its course and Americans are exhibiting a renewed interest in religion, spirituality, and church membership. Third, the economic downturn of the late 1980s and early 1990s has toned down some

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of the more decadent expressions of affluence and converted many one-time trend-setters to homespun comforts and values. This renewed interest in the quality of family life, Popenoe predicted, is bound to increase as social scientists continue to find evidence of the link between weak family bonds and the social malaise of youth.

But despite its hopeful expectations, Popenoe cautioned, prospects for the New Familism are not entirely rosy. Many of the younger people who form its core, Popenoe insists, lack the role models that have traditionally helped people overcome challenges and adversity in marriage. Much of the renewed American interest in religion and spirituality is New Age spiritualism that is conspicuously anti-traditional, culturally rootless, and relatively silent on the importance of marriage and family.

Family Research Council president Gary Bauer concedes that support for family values is as scarce in the university and among the opinion-making intellectual, professional, and moneyed elite as it is in Hollywood. There is still enormous hostility to the kind of changes our society needs to make in order to create a more wholesome environment for child rearing. Perhaps the most disturbing deficit of the New Familism is the extent to which American parents acquiesce to the role of disenfranchised minority, retreating from civic activism.

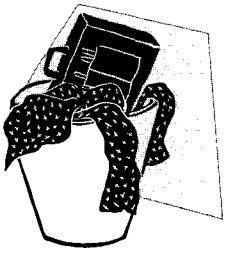
In general, says David Blankenhorn, president of the Institute for American Values and author of *Fatherless America*, Americans seem to have "surrendered the keys" to what is becoming an increasingly family-hostile culture. Statistics on civic participation of baby boomers support Blankenhorn's observation. In the past generation there has been a disturbing drop in membership in civic and political organizations. The voting rate among baby boomers, who constitute the bulk of the parent population, is approximately thirty-eight percent, markedly lower than that of the preceeding generation. Membership in the PTA has declined by more than half in the last thirty years. The ranks of volunteer service organizations like the League of Women Voters and the Red Cross have also declined significantly, as has the attendance at town and school meetings (down thirty-nine percent from 1973 to 1993) and political party volunteerism (down fifty-six percent in the same time period).

Being too harried or busy to help out is, apparently, not the problem: Darcie Sanders and Martha M. Bullen report that of the women whom they surveyed, only 5.9 percent did more volunteer work as at-home mothers than as working women, and only 1.3 percent were more active in the PTA.

Several family scholars, among them economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett, reflect that if civic involvement is the key to realizing family interests in public policy, civic apathy among parents may be the biggest obstacle ahead for pro-family interests. Parents are a minority; as of 1990, only thirty-five percent of American households had children, as compared with sixty percent in 1960. But that does not explain why they enjoy so much less political power than, for example, retired Americans. "To a distressing degree," Hewlett comments, referring to the results of the disparity in political activity between parents and senior citizens, "public policy is being used to transfer money from the needy young to the comfortable old."

Why is the "civic dimension of family life" (to use a well-turned phrase of professor Jean Bethke Elshtain's) no longer compelling to parents? Perhaps because parents increasingly register frustration with and alienation from the very civic institutions they once trusted to support and complete their child-rearing work. The schools, the legal system, the media, even social service agencies—parents charge—undermine their best efforts to raise decent children. Parental rights may or may not be the issue that finally moves a silent majority of parents to political involvement. But the accelerating debate surrounding parental-rights initiatives will surely bring to the fore many principles that unite parents and can form the basis of a more family-friendly policy agenda. American parents want more family time and more involvement in their children's upbringing and development. They want a return to sounder moral and cultural values.

Until now they have largely remained a disenfranchised minority in passive retreat from the culture. But they are emerging as a force with which our government and professional elites will ultimately be forced to reckon. ◆



From Dana Mack's forthcoming book, The Assault on Parenthood: How Our Culture Undermines the Family. *© 1997 by Dana Mack. Adapted with permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc.*

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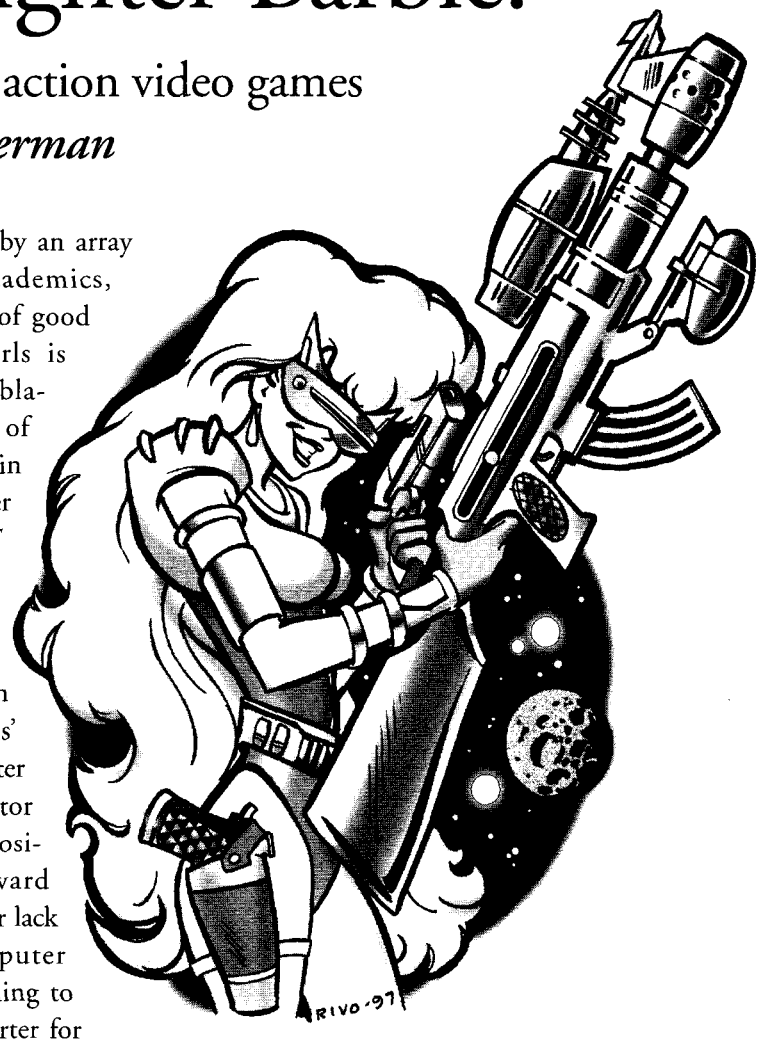
Where Is Space Fighter Barbie?

Feminists want to see more mindless action video games targeted at girls, reports *Stephanie Herman*



Imagine your nine-year-old daughter planted firmly in front of the TV, banging her thumbs on a control pad for hours on end, blowing away knife-wielding Ninjas with an ambitiously amassed cache of nuclear ammunition. Cause for alarm? Certainly not. She's participating in an exercise of technological literacy—and transcending sex-role stereotyping to boot!

At least, that's the hope. New companies are fiercely competing with each other to design video and computer games that will appeal to young girls, a potentially lucrative market as yet untapped by giants like Nintendo and Sega, whose games mostly appeal to boys. But as with any nineties' marketing venture, an industry's desire to make huge amounts of money from a new product—particularly one targeted at children—must be piously wrapped in assurances that the new product is educational and generally for the social good.

So executives at companies like Girl Tech, Her Interactive, and Girls Games, are quick to insist that the more girls' thumbs on control pads today, the greater the number of women entering the fields of science and technology in the future. A banner at Her Interactive's website, promoting its new girl-targeted game "McKenzie & Co." boasts, "Computer games for girls like 'McKenzie and Co.' will help encourage the use of technology." And these executives are bolstered in their claim by an array of busy feminist academics, who feel the dearth of good video games for girls is further evidence of blatant discouragement of female participation in the world of computer technology. In an MIT report, "Why Are There So Few Female Computer Scientists?," graduate student Ellen Spertus writes: "Girls' lesser usage of computer games could be a factor in their being less positively disposed toward computers and in their lack of interest in computer courses." And according to Illana DeBare, a reporter for the *Sacramento Bee*, women in the video game industry insist that "there are good reasons for all kids to play video games, namely that games can be a gateway to computer literacy, an essential skill for economic survival in the twenty-first century."

But will playing six rounds of Duke Nukem a day actually aid a girl's computer literacy and propel her closer towards a degree in the sciences? Most parents spurn video games, and with good reason. Aside from keeping young minds idle and young bodies sedentary, published studies over the last decade have suggested that video games can increase levels of aggression and negatively influence the behavior of children who use them. In a study conducted by George Selnow, assistant professor of communications at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, children were found to substitute video games for social interaction and friendship. In a 1992 article published in the *American School Board Journal*, Eugene Provenzo, professor of education at the University of Miami, suggested that because video game players operate in virtual anonymity, they learn to act independently of social norms. And in a 1984 study published in the *Journal of Communication*, Joseph Dominick, a professor at

Drawing by Paul Rivoche

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the University of Georgia, found that boys who frequently played games at video arcades showed correspondingly low levels of self-esteem.

While these studies may confirm the suspicions of conscientious parents, they seem to have little influence upon those convinced that young girls spending more time playing video games would benefit by the activity—girls who might otherwise be wasting time drawing pictures, playing the piano, or reading books. And it would be lucrative, too, at least for the manufacturers of video games: Teenage girls spend over $57 billion of their own money every year. The company that can finally crack the elusive female video game market, acknowledged one woman in the video industry, "is going to make a lot of money."

This hope, though, may be a little bit like the money American companies once dreamt of if only they could crack the potentially huge market of China. Alas, what many of them found out was that it doesn't matter that a market is big if the people in it won't buy your product. The advocates of female video games believe that the only reason girls don't join computer clubs or programming classes at the same rate as boys is because they perceive—or are being led to perceive—that computers are a "boy's thing." Every aspect of computing is blamed for this alleged perception: from men appearing in computer advertisements, through the highly organized and focused, *i.e.*, "male-oriented" nature of programming, to the stark, drab walls and isolating cubicles of computer labs. Persuade them that it's a girl's thing too and, well, you have the feminist equivalent of the corporate vision of a billion Chinese buying Coke.

Who's joining clubs and classes, however, isn't a fool-proof indicator of who's using computers. It turns out, actually, that girls are already interfacing at nearly the same rate as boys: Forty-two percent of teen girls regularly use computers compared to forty-six percent of boys. In fact, in a 1994 study of boys' and girls' reactions to computer software, Netiva Caftori, a professor at Northeastern Illinois University, found that "the majority of both boys and girls (grades one through three) do not fear the machine." But what researchers have discovered is that girls, unlike boys, aren't usually drawn to the computer to play games. While boys tend to view computers largely as modes of entertainment, girls tend to view computers as tools.

For instance, in a 1996 masters project for the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Dorothy Ellen Wilcox asked sixth-grade girls to keep a journal of their experiences with computers. Wilcox found that most of her subjects had strong reservations regarding computers' entertainment value. One female student wrote: "I think computers were made to help people as tools, and I think that is how they should be used in schools. With real little kids, they should be used for games, but by the second or third grade, they should be learning skills to use on computers." Another student, relates Wilcox, "thoughtfully valued computers as tools and did not want them to be seen as more fiction and entertainment, as found on television."

Most researchers concur that girls seem more interested in using computers than in playing with them. A 1993 study, conducted by E-GEMS (Electronic Games for Education in Math and Science) at the University of British Columbia, concluded that "proportionally more girls were attracted to the computers than to the video game stations." And a 1989 study on arcade video games, published in the *Journal of Leisure Research*, reported that boys outnumbered girls eight to one at video game arcades. In fact, it is perhaps this "gender gap" in video game usage that accounts for the misdirected hysteria surrounding the much smaller gap in computer usage.

This is not to suggest that girls don't play electronic games. In fact, they play on both computer and video-game formats, but not necessarily in preparation for the future. Jane, a student participating in the E-GEMS study, explained: "When I play video games, I feel that I have done nothing. If anyone asks me what I was doing, I have nothing to show for it." There's certainly nothing wrong with playing games purely for entertainment's sake, and research shows that young girls enjoy electronic games that are both challenging and emotionally meaningful, complete with complex social relationships, an intelligible plot, and female lead characters.

But the new companies designing such games for girls are having trouble squaring what girls say they want with what feminist academics want for them. Her Interactive's "McKenzie & Co.," for instance, has players become one of the "cool" students at the fictional Madison High School. The game offers various moral and social dilemmas that any young girl might encounter during her teen years, but also allows players to solve puzzles, dabble in cosmetic, hair, and wardrobe makeovers, and plan for the big prom. Company spokeswoman Gail Rubin reports the game is a huge success, and

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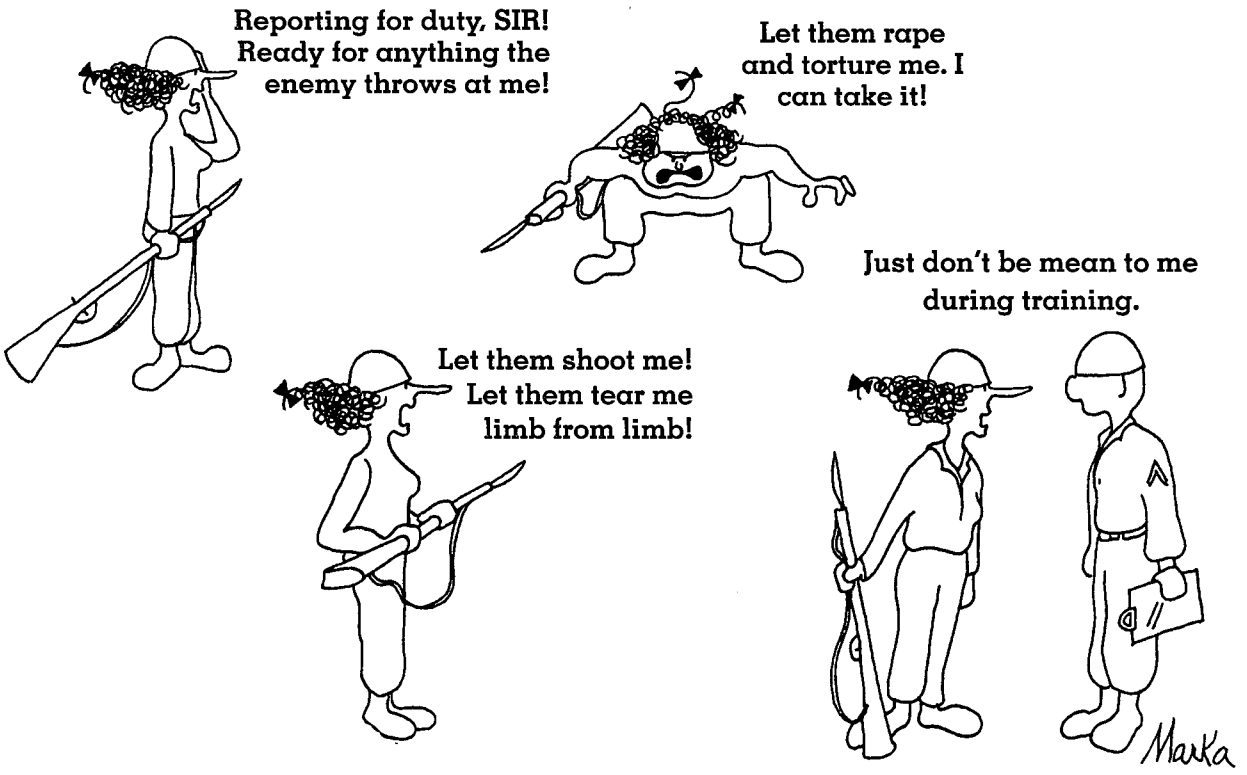
that girls adore it, some playing it for six hours at a time. But no one seems to be asking the obvious question: Couldn't girls be using their time more productively, say, studying algebra or biology?

Instead, feminist academics are bothered not by the fact that girls would choose an activity so unproductive, but one so stereotypical. They insist that girls enjoy this type of "fluffware" because they are conditioned by society to do so. After finding that her third-grade female subjects preferred software involving a clock game, feeding animals, or dressing a woman to games involving fighter planes, space ships, or street fighting, Caftori concluded that the girls' preferences "reflect some consensus, some accepted stereotypes, that even youngsters are already aware of." Melissa Chaika, co-founder of a "gender issues group" at Rice University, shared this attitude in her 1995 senior thesis. In "Ethical Considerations in Gender-Oriented Entertainment Technology" she wrote, "The reality is that many girls want exactly what society has taught them to desire: looking pretty, wearing fashionable clothes, attracting cute boys, applying make-up properly—and avoiding technology."

The joke on these academics, though, is that despite all the propaganda to the contrary, girls aren't avoiding technology or the types of careers that feminists so eagerly hope will be produced by spending more time with video games. According to the *Science and Engineering 1993 Indicators*, published by the National Science Board, the number of men earning bachelor's degrees in science and engineering fell from 210,741 in 1975 to 189,328 in 1991, while women's degrees in science and engineering rose from 102,814 in 1975 to 148,347 in 1991.

Maybe that's because these wise young women understand that success does not come from blowing afternoons in video arcades. As the E-GEMS researchers found, most girls would rather read a book than play video games—an activity that hardly seems detrimental to the development of their minds, and is certainly much easier on the thumbs. ◆

Writer Stephanie Herman critiques feminist issues for several publications. Her article "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" appeared in the Winter 1996 issue of TWQ.


Reporting for duty, SIR! Ready for anything the enemy throws at me!
Let them rape and torture me. I can take it!
Just don't be mean to me during training.
Let them shoot me! Let them tear me limb from limb!
Marka

Cartoon by Marka Lazar

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Correspondence

We are always interested in hearing how readers found out about us—one lady called recently to tell us she'd come across a copy of TWQ *in her hair salon. And more and more of you are visiting the Independent Women's Forum's website (http://www.iwf.org). We haven't made much hullabaloo about our site because, until recently, it's been a bit untidy due to a shortage of help (where is the Internet equivalent of Merry Maids?). We're pleased to announce finally that—thanks to the efforts of our resident computer geek Joyce Press and assistant Rhonda Mohrmann—the joint's starting to shape up. You will soon be able to access all of the past articles of* TWQ *on the 'net, as well as view the table of contents from the current issue. You can also keep up-to-date on the activities of the Independent Women's Forum: its positions on current issues, its Washington speaker series, and information about upcoming events and the many other worthy things the organization does. And you may join the IWF with the push of a button, or send us e-mail directly.*

So stop by, stay a while, have a chat. And if you're one of those old-fashioned types, you may of course continue to communicate with us, as so many of you do, on your nice floral stationery. Write letters to the editor c/o The Women's Quarterly, *2111 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550, Arlington, Virginia 22201-3057, or fax to 703/243-9230.*

Help yourself

After reading "Why Good Help Is Hard to Find" by David Frum (Winter 1997), I found myself considering the professionally qualified women who remain at home

to care for their offspring. If their sisters who choose professional positions manage to gain a child-care tax break, why wouldn't it follow that professionally qualified women who opt for full-time nurturing be compensated with a tax break also? I have no problem with women having careers, but please don't ask the rest of society to underwrite their choice.

NATALIE J. BROWN
Midland, Michigan

Stop whining

Your issue devoted to "The Servant Problem" (Winter 1997) was disappointing. Its very premise was the flawed feminist credo that women come first, even before their own children. You framed the question the way every women's or parents' magazine already does: How can women do what they want (*i.e.* work) but still have children? Enough of this self-centered whining. Women are grownups and can take care of themselves. Children cannot. At issue shouldn't be the "needs of mothers" as you put it, but the needs of children. Elizabeth Powers, in her enlightened piece "A Farewell to Feminism" (*Commentary*, January 1997) writes about women who "have it all": "Most of these women have probably not dwelt on the consequences of the Faustian bargain they have struck, but their example says loudly and clearly that children are interchangeable units and that the values they learn can be equally well acquired from a Norwegian au pair and after-school public television as from parents." *The Women's Quarterly,* ahead of its time on so many issues, is behind the curve on this one.

MARCIA SEGELSTEIN
Westport, Connecticut

And take this, you cheapskates!

I have always enjoyed reading David Frum's articles because he is a principled conservative who demands fealty to free market principles for everyone...even when it hurts. And I have chuckled and laughed at the against-the-grain articles which have appeared in *TWQ*. Which is why I was positively dismayed to read the collection of articles on "The Servant Problem," including Frum's piece on "Why Good Help Is Hard to Find."

The reason good help is hard to find is because people don't want to pay what it takes to get good help. Of course, Frum will say the truth is always more complex than that. So do the following experiment with your own family income: Trace the increase in your household income per hour per week over the past twenty years. Then trace the change in your household

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help's cost to you. You will find a wild divergence between these two curves. In other words, the real income of household help has fallen, and not because the government won't subsidize it in the form of tax breaks, but because the clearing price has been systematically lowered by the very immigrant-driven labor supply which Frum cites as a *benefit.*

Now try the second thought experiment: Imagine the U.S. with no unskilled immigration for the past decade. What would have happened? 1) Wages for household help would have risen, perhaps enough to overcome the reservations of low-skilled blacks and whites and the cultural resistance to housework. 2) Drawn by the rising price, clever entrepreneurs would have provided domestic help through temporary services similar to ones that provide secretaries and accountants, which often provide health care, vacation time, and even retirement benefits, rather than the "bottom of the labor market" services which do it now. 3) The price of privately provided day care would have risen, attracting capital and talent to improve private day care.

In the end, people like you and me would have paid more of our income for the people who raise our kids and clean our houses, leaving less to go around for other desires. Some workers would have been attracted from welfare or from being a counter clerk at clothing stores by the higher wages in household work and day-care centers. New forms of service delivery would have been developed that you or I can't imagine because rising costs are the mother of invention. And, I suspect, the social class of child-care providers would have risen. (Notice how secretaries are now called "administrative assistants?" Let the labor market squeeze and you'd start calling your nanny a "child care professional.") Seen in this light, the past issue of *TWQ* sounds like the typical whine of a self-interested industry which cheers for market-based solutions until the market makes them pay more for a good or service. Since the group on behalf of which it whines is upper-class women, and the group whose wages are being depressed by the favored solution are lower-class women, the argument starts to stink.

Somebody needs to give the conservative purchasers of home services a couple of swift kicks in the rear and remind them that it may be harder to live up to your principles than it is to fight for them, but hypocrites make poor preachers in the long run. Conservative free market promoters have been big advocates of the open borders that have interfered with normal market processes that would likely have solved this problem. Notwithstanding that, a new market for effective, appropriate household help would have been created if their class had been willing to pay for the kind of personal assistance they *say* they want. But then, such rear-kicking is usually your job, isn't it?

ROGER CONNER
American Alliance for Rights
and Responsibilities
Washington, D.C.

David Frum responds:

I DON'T KNOW that it shows any lack of faith in markets in general to try to figure out why one market in particular is functioning in a less than satisfactory way. I quite agree that all too many employers of domestic help are penny-wise, pound-foolish about the people they employ. And I concede, too, that there is some truth to the argument that immigration is depressing the wages of less-skilled American workers. I don't know that I would pin all the blame on immigrants, however: I suspect that in child care, as in other areas of the low-skill job market, the gap between the expectations of the least-skilled American workers and their abilities is so large as to dislocate the market even without immigrants.

But none of this gets to the point. How is it "whining" to point out that there is something odd about rules that permit a lady executive to deduct the wages of the driver who takes her to work, or the secretary who takes her messages, or the busboy who picks up her tray in the company cafeteria, but not the baby-sitter who enables her to go?

What you need to do, to argue your case, is to explain why this one particular form of employment is unique—why domestic employees, alone among all employees, should not be subject to the usual rules relating to the deductibility of employment expenses. Nor will it work simply to exhort employers to pay more for child care. Middle-class parents are clearly willing to pay lavishly for products they have convinced themselves will do good for their children: Look at the price inflation of college tuition. The low quality of most of the workers in the nanny market is not evidence of the stinginess of parents; it's evidence that the market is structured in such a way as to scare off good workers. How?

The non-deductibility of domestic wages creates tremendous incentives for cheating on taxes. Most employers want the IRS to know about their employment costs because they're deductible. A domestic employer gains nothing from filing, and his employee loses up to a quarter of her income. These incentives have caused the market for domestic services to become dominated by off-the-books workers. That in turn discourages more ambitious and less marginal workers to avoid domestic work in favor of work that (though it may not pay any more and may even be less pleasant) is at least performed within the ambit of the law. Something is very seriously wrong with this corner of the labor market. Its uniquely perverse

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incentives bring out the worst in both employers and employees. And mere exhortation won't improve matters.

Mother's helpers

THE WINTER 1997 issue of *TWQ* was one of the best you have ever produced. I was unaware until now of how effectively both United States domestic tax laws and our immigration policies work against the interests of those who wish to work as, or to hire, capable in-home child care employees. I hope that you can in the future give your readers information on groups or individuals that are working to change these rules so that we may encourage their efforts. However, as someone who gladly stayed home full-time to raise our three children (despite my B.A., M.A., and previous career), and whose daughter (with similar credentials) and son-in-law have made the same decision for our only grandchild (so far), I am writing to ask you to spread the word about a national nonprofit organization called Mothers At Home, and their excellent publication, *Welcome Home*. This group is for the mother who shares our belief that children of all ages need generous amounts of their parents' time. *Welcome Home* provides a forum in which mothers can provide support, information, and insight as we share our struggles and successes. (*Welcome Home* is published monthly for $18 annually. Write to Mothers At Home, 8310A Old Courthouse Road, Vienna, VA 22182. Telephone: 703/827-5903, or for subscription orders call 800/783-4666.)

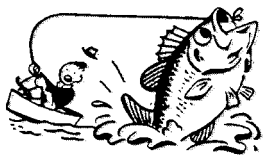
CHERRY CARNELL
Fairfax, Virginia

How about a book on this?

I WANT TO tell you how much I appreciated the Winter 1997 issue of *TWQ*. I had the problem of child help twenty years ago and now many of the women I talk to in my business—publishing—have it with their younger children.

An editor I spoke to recently told me how she lived in dread of the IRS or the INS finding out about the illegal woman who's taken care of her kids for years, and how she would love to be able to pay her more money and deduct it. I continue to hear from the younger mothers in publishing how impossible it is to find help that is here legally. But I expect you've received a lot of mail telling you similar stories. I hope very much that your issue helps to ameliorate the situation.

MILDRED MARMUR
Larchmont, New York



Animal lovers for research

THANK YOU SO much for printing Sally Satel's article "Animal Crackers" in your Summer 1996 issue of *TWQ*. I have been working in research animal care at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine for the past twenty-one years because of my interest in and commitment to animal welfare. My husband's work is in heart transplant studies that use rat, pig, and calf models. We and our five-year-old son share our home with two cats and two Labrador retrievers, and are outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, birdwatching (and feeding!) in our spare time. We are active in our local Ducks Unlimited organization as well. In a nutshell, we enjoy our rights as human beings while realizing our responsibilities to the stewardship of animals and the environment. I agree that PETA and other animal rights groups have taken in the support of well-meaning people who need to be educated to the hidden agendas of these organizations. Satel's article was much appreciated by those of us in the field of medical and veterinary research.

JANE E. ROBINSON
Columbia, Maryland

Just for the articles, of course

AFTER HEARING EXCERPTS of some articles from *TWQ*, read by Dennis Prager during his radio talk show, I had to subscribe. Today I received my first copy (Winter 1997)—it's some wonderful reading! I'll be sure to tell all my friends about the IWF. We need more groups with voices of reason in our society. And just a personal note of irony: In my household, where my wife and I are both college students, she subscribes to *Playboy* and I to *TWQ*.

SWAV JURKIEWICZ
Simi Valley, California

First New Jersey, then the world

I HAD THE thrill of seeing your publication with its own name plate and back-issue storage area at the local library. It took months of effort and gentle inquiry but I did it! As the saying goes, Think globally, act locally. If every reader would get *TWQ* into their library—you may have to absorb the cost of subscription—freedom of speech would begin to regain some authenticity. Grow and prosper, little magazine.

SUSAN O'DAUGHERTY
Morristown, New Jersey

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POLL-POURRI

Karlyn Bowman reveals that women hate clones, trust prostitutes over politicians

We are pleased to welcome Karlyn Bowman, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, to the pages of TWQ. *Mrs. Bowman is the most scrupulous tracker of public opinion and statistics in Washington. At the risk of giving away one of the biggest trade secrets of local pundits, many of their best facts come straight from the arsenal of Mrs. Bowman's filing cabinet. We'll continue to feature her findings in future issues of the magazine.*

"Hello, Dolly/You're not swell, Dolly/'Twould be nice if you went back where you belong. . ."

Women are more skeptical about cloning than men, though neither sex is very enthusiastic. A survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time* and CNN shows that women are more likely than men to say cloning animals is a bad idea (seventy-five percent vs. fifty-six percent), more likely to believe cloning is against God's will (sixty-six percent vs. fifty-one percent), and more likely than men to find the practice morally unacceptable (seventy-three percent vs. fifty-seven percent). In a March Opinion Dynamics/Fox News poll, fifty-eight percent of women, compared to forty-five percent of men, say the risks outweigh the potential benefits. Both men and women are adamantly opposed to cloning humans, but once again sex differences appear, with women more opposed.

Although the data don't tell us why women dislike cloning more than men, polls have long shown that women are more risk averse. In general, women are more likely to support government regulation than men. They are less likely to approve of nuclear power and more likely to wear seat belts. Women are also more actively religious than men, and many surveys show them as sterner guardians of traditional morality. This, too, may contribute to their doubts about cloning.

Stand up when you say "Sir"

In 1952, seventy-six percent of parents told Gallup interviewers that grade school children should be taught to address men as "Sir." Gallup didn't repeat the question until early this year, and when the pollsters did, seventy-one percent agreed. Sixty-eight percent in 1952 and sixty percent in 1997 said that children should be taught to stand up when older guests come into a room.

The new Gallup poll actually showed that more Americans today (sixty-three percent) say grace or give thanks aloud than did so in 1947 (forty-three percent). Nearly four in ten say their families eat dinner together seven days a week, and an additional fifteen percent say they do so six days a week. Twenty percent manage to sit down together to eat five days a week.

They lie enough when they're young

If you had a son, would you like to see him go into politics? Gallup first asked that question in 1945, and a resounding sixty-eight percent of Americans said "no." The survey organization didn't inquire about daughters until 1991. The responses in that year were about the same for sons and daughters. Around seven in ten found the prospect unattractive, and only about a quarter thought it appealing. The 1995 results confirmed the lack of interest. About a third approved of a political career for a child, but six in ten did not.

Trust those who sell their bodies over those who would their votes

Who is most likely to tell you the truth—a prostitute, a used car salesman, or a politician? When Opinion Dynamics posed that question in a January poll for Fox News, majorities of men, women, Republicans, Democrats, independents, liberals, moderates, and conservatives were in agreement. Nationally, fifty-five percent picked the prostitute, twelve percent the politician, and eleven percent the used car salesman. ◆

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An "increasingly high-profile group that says the time has come to put a new face on feminism."

–Ed Bradley, correspondent for CBS's "60 Minutes," on the IWF

For the past five years, the Independent Women's Forum has been taking on the old establishment of feminist organizations—and winning. "The IWF has a profile almost unheard of for a group that is the new kid on the block," writes the *Boston Globe*. "In the marketplace of ideas, from the national news media all the way down to local radio, the IWF has shown its real strength.... [The] IWF is well on its way to becoming the foremost media nemesis of the feminist movement."

Why has the IWF been so successful? Because the women who make up the IWF are not radical ideologues —they're businesswomen, economists, lawyers, truck drivers, and also mothers. Because the IWF promotes individual responsibility, strong families, limited government, and opportunity—policies that help *all* Americans. Because the IWF, a non-partisan, non-profit Washington-based organization, sponsors speaker events and conferences noted for their provocative and free-ranging debates. And because the IWF publishes *The Women's Quarterly*—an intellectual antidote to *Ms.*—which syndicated columnist Mona Charen praises as, "My type of women's magazine! With humor and sarcasm but also with warmth and passion, these women offer an intelligent refutation of the leading feminist nonsense that is swallowed so uncritically by the mainstream press."

Why not join us? Check "Yes, I want to join" on the enclosed reply card, and you'll receive a year's subscription to *The Women's Quarterly** as well as our insiders-only newsletter *Ex Femina,* special invitations to our conferences and speeches, and discounts on books and events. Most important, you'll be adding another voice of reason—yours!—to the cultural and political debates of our time.

* Separate subscriptions to *The Women's Quarterly* are also available. See reply card for details.

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